Electrification of villages in Himachal Pradesh

4348. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of villages in Himachal Pradesh which have not yet been electrified;

(b) whether Government have any plan to allot special funds to Government of Himachal Pradesh to electrify all the villages, specially those in remote areas in the State during the next two years; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) As per CEA's statistics, out of total of 16997 inhabited villages (as per 1991 census) in Himachal Pradesh, 16881 villages have been reported to be electrified as on 28.2.2001 leaving a balance of 116 villages remaining to be electrified.

(b) and (c) Finance Minister, in his speech while presenting the Union Budget for 2001-02 has announced the launch of a package of initiatives by the Government to improve the power distribution system in rural areas. This includes completion of electrification of bulk of the remaining villages in the next six years; extension of assistance to the States for village electrification works under the Prime Minister's Gramodyog Yojana (PMGY) whose funding is being augmented; stepping up credit support from the Rural Electrification Corporation to SEBs for speedy electrification of dalit *bastis,* households of scheduled tribes and other weaker sections of society; improving the quality of power supply in villages, augmentation of distribution networks in rural areas supported by REC under the Accelerated Power Development Programme; earmarking a sum of at least Rs. 750 crore out of RIDF for rural electrification works; augmenting the resources of REC, by allowing it to float capital gains tax exemption bonds along with NABARD and NHAI under Section

54 EC of the Income Tax Act. The proposals of electrification of villages during the next two years in Himachal Pradesh would also be covered under the above mentioned package of initiatives.

Imposition of Cess on Power Consumers

4349. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:
SHRI ABANI ROY:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to impose a cess on consumers of power in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and objectives to be achieved thereby and whether approval of CERC has been sought in this regard;

(c) the total amount of fund that is likely to be mobilized annually;

(d) whether the State Governments have been consulted in this regard;

(e) if so, the details of their reactions;

(f) whether levying of the cess will ease the liability of the State Electricity Boards in any way; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) to (g) The policy on Hydro Power Development announced by the Government of India in August 1998 provides for establishment for National Power Development Fund through levy of cess at 10 paise per Kwh of electricity consumed in the country. The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), however, in its order dated 21.12.2000 in the matter of operational norms for thermal generation etc. have fixed a development surcharge on every bill for fixed charges (for National Hydro Electric Power Corporation both on capacity and energy charges) raised by utilities in respect of generation/transmission at regional levels. The rates of surcharge are